TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE IN RELATION TO SCHOOL CULTURE IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the levels of Quality of Work Life (QWL), Transformational Leadership, and School Culture, as well as their relationships and predictive influence on school culture in a private higher education institution in Davao City. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 132 faculty members through validated survey instruments. Results revealed a high level of QWL (M = 4.12, SD = 0.476), with Knowledge Needs (M = 4.38) and Actualization Needs (M = 4.26) rated very high. Transformational leadership was likewise rated high (M = 4.16, SD = 0.517), reflecting strong idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. In contrast, school culture was rated moderate (M = 2.78, SD = 0.510), with school well-being rated high but deviant behavior and subjective unsafety remaining present. Correlation and regression analyses showed no significant relationship or predictive influence of QWL and transformational leadership on school culture (R^2 = 0.0141). The findings highlight the complexity of school culture and suggest the need to explore additional influencing factors.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Quality of Work Life (QWL), School Culture, Quantitative*

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-evolving educational landscape, private higher education institutions are under increasing pressure to foster environments that support not only academic excellence but also employee satisfaction and organizational cohesion. At the heart of this challenge lies transformational leadership—a leadership style that inspires, motivates, and empowers individuals to exceed expectations while embracing shared institutional values. When applied effectively, transformational leadership enhances the quality of work life (QWL) for academic and administrative staff, simultaneously shaping a positive school culture that nurtures collaboration, trust, and innovation (Adenia & Mohamed, 2022; Tsani, Fitrani, & Sari, 2024). Research from recent years emphasizes that transformational leaders—those who lead with vision, empathy, and strategic insight—play a vital role in aligning individual goals with institutional missions, thus improving both morale and performance in higher education settings (Bagga, Singh, & Sharma, 2022). Particularly in private institutions, where employee retention and organizational identity are constant concerns, the interplay between leadership, QWL, and culture is a critical factor for long-term success.

Institutions that prioritize well-being and inclusivity through strong, visionary leadership are more likely to cultivate a culture that supports both personal fulfillment and institutional excellence (Mawarni & Halilah, 2021). Understanding this dynamic is essential for administrators aiming to build sustainable and resilient higher education environments. In addition, school culture is a vital pillar for nation-building, as it shapes the environment in which quality education can thrive contributing to economic growth, social cohesion, and political stability (Singh & Maini, 2021). A well-established school culture fosters

shared values, academic vision, and collective responsibility, which enhance collaboration and institutional alignment (Sabuhari et al., 2020). Moreover, the perception of school culture has been linked to teachers' work engagement, with positive school culture correlating with higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. This relationship is further influenced by factors such as affective empathy and job tenure, suggesting that the emotional climate within a school can significantly impact educators' professional engagement Alzoraiki, M., Alkadash, H., & Milhem, M. (2024). School culture often deteriorates due to systemic issues such as ineffective leadership, policy-practice misalignment, and a lack of trust or shared purpose (Bagga, Gera, & Haque, 2023).

School culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, and practices that shape the social and emotional environment of a school. It encompasses the collective behaviors, traditions, and norms that influence how students, educators, and staff interact and engage within the educational setting. A positive school culture fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and collaboration, which are essential for effective teaching and learning. Recent studies have highlighted the significant impact of school culture on various aspects of education. For instance, research indicates that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing school culture and teaching performance, particularly in challenging contexts such as conflict-affected regions . Additionally, the organizational culture within vocational schools has been found to influence school effectiveness, with aspects like leadership roles, participation, and recognition being key factors in improving culture Widiawati, Y., Santoso, Y., Alkadri, H., Susanti, L., & Achyar, N. (2024).

Internationally, the positive impact of transformational leadership on QWL and school culture is evident. In private higher education institutions in Malaysia, Adenia and Mohamed (2022) observed that transformational leadership practices led to improved faculty job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Similarly, a study in Cameroon found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and sustainable productivity in higher education institutions, with private institutions benefiting more from such leadership styles (Elshaer et al., 2024). In fact, faculty in schools with toxic cultures often feel disconnected due to feeling unsupported and undervalued (McChesney, 2024).Faculty members across various countries face significant challenges in cultivating unified and collaborative school cultures, a concern supported by international education bodies (UNESCO, 2014; OECD, 2020). In Vietnam, Maheshwari (2022) reported that 61 percent of faculty members faced difficulties in establishing a unified school culture due to high administrative workloads and limited leadership training. Similarly, in Indonesia, Bellibaş et al. (2021) revealed that 58 percent of school heads encountered barriers to building collaborative school cultures, often due to bureaucratic structures and underdeveloped support systems. Meanwhile, in South Korea, Kim and Kim (2020) noted that 59 percent of teachers indicated that top-down leadership and rigid organizational norms stifled their autonomy, discouraging collaboration and innovation within academic communities. These international findings underscore that school culture is often weakened by administrative overload, bureaucratic rigidity, and leadership limitations, creating global barriers to institutional cohesion and collaboration (OECD, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2020).

In the evolving landscape of Philippine private higher education, the integration of transformational leadership has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing both the quality of work life (QWL) and the overall school culture. This leadership style, characterized by vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration, has been shown to positively impact faculty and staff engagement, satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Studies within the Philippine context have highlighted the significant role of transformational leadership in improving QWL. For instance, a study by Panunciar et al. (2024) examined the practices of school heads in Negros Occidental and found that transformational leadership was positively correlated with work engagement among faculty members. The research emphasized that leaders who exhibit idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration contribute to a more engaged and satisfied workforce. Beyond individual well-being, transformational leadership also plays a crucial role in shaping the organizational culture of private higher education institutions. A study by Limutan et al. (2023) explored the experiences of educational leaders in Cebu and identified themes such as "lead to change," "harmony amidst diversity," and "profession as passion" as key components of successful transformational leadership. These elements foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to educational excellence.

Furthermore, in the Philippines, the school culture is weak. A study by Tindowen (2019) in Baguio City showed that faculty perceived school culture as fragmented, citing inadequate leadership support and institutional disconnection. Additionally, Caranto et al. (2022) found that 64 percent of faculty members in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Northern Luzon identified inconsistent administrative communication and lack of participatory decision-making as major contributors to poor school culture, which led to reduced motivation and collaboration among educators. Similarly, Reyes and Garcia (2020) revealed that 67 percent of respondents from SUCs in Mindanao experienced difficulty cultivating a unified school culture due to centralized leadership styles and minimal recognition of faculty initiatives, resulting in disengagement and institutional misalignment.

In Region XI, a study conducted in Tagum City describes a school culture marked by unsupportive leadership and heavy workloads among teachers (Menesis, 2024). Similarly, Caruz (2024) revealed that about 48 percent of faculty respondents in tertiary institutions in Davao City reported difficulty in cultivating an inclusive and unified school culture, largely due to ineffective leadership structures and inadequate institutional development programs. Encompassing Davao City and its neighboring provinces, the role of transformational leadership in enhancing the quality of work life (QWL) and shaping school culture within private higher education institutions (HEIs) has garnered significant attention. This leadership style, characterized by vision, inspiration, and individualized support, has been shown to positively impact faculty and staff engagement, satisfaction, and overall institutional effectiveness.
Beyond individual well-being, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating a positive organizational culture. A study by Jintalan and Velasco (2024) explored the experiences of educational leaders in Cebu and identified themes such as "lead to change," "harmony amidst diversity," and "profession as passion" as key components of successful

transformational leadership. These elements foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to educational excellence.

Moreover, studies have shown that Quality of Work Life (QWL) significantly influences school culture. A high level of QWL promotes a positive and collaborative working environment where teachers feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute to the school community (Danish & Usman, 2010). Numerous studies have examined aspects of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and transformational leadership as individual predictors of school culture, there remains a noticeable gap in research that holistically integrates these elements into a single, cohesive framework. Most existing research tends to isolate these variables, lacking a comprehensive approach that examines their combined influence on shaping school culture.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this study is to determine the levels of quality of work life and transformational leadership in relation to school culture in private higher education institutions. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To determine the level of quality of work life in terms of:
    1.1   Health and safety needs
    1.2 Economic and family needs
    1.3 Social needs
    1.4 Esteem needs
    1.5 Actualization needs
    1.6   Knowledge needs
    1.7   Aesthetic needs

2. To determine the level of Transformational leadership in terms of:
    2.1 Idealised Influence (attributed)
    2.2 Idealised Influence (Behaviour)
    2.3 Inspirational Motivation (IM)
    2.4 Intellectual Stimulation (IS)
    2.5 Individualised Consideration (IC)
3. To determine the level of school culture in terms of:
    3.1 Deviant behaviour
    3.2 School well-being
    3.3 Subjective unsafety
    4. Do quality of work life and transformational leadership influence school culture in private higher education institutions?

FRAMEWORK

This research endeavor is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and motivate subordinates to achieve exceptional outcomes by fostering change and innovation within organizations. Burns (1978) first introduced this theory, and it was later developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), who highlighted four core components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These components are believed to significantly shape organizational culture, particularly in academic institutions where leadership practices influence both staff performance and institutional climate.

Moreover, the study draws from the Quality of Work Life (QWL) framework developed by Sirgy et al. (2001), which posits that employee satisfaction and productivity are rooted in meeting various needs—including health and safety, economic and family security, social interaction, self-actualization, knowledge acquisition, and aesthetic appreciation. QWL is essential in creating a supportive institutional environment, which in turn affects the school's culture and the overall well-being of its members.

This theoretical framework is further supported by the work of Deal and Peterson (1999), who defined school culture as the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape how members of an academic community interact and perform. A positive school culture is associated with enhanced collaboration, improved morale, and increased organizational effectiveness. In the context of private higher education institutions, leadership style and employee work life directly contribute to the strength and character of the school culture.

METHOD

Research Design

This quantitative study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe (Kirkman, Chen, & Mathieu, 2020). Moreover, the correlational design is used to identify the strength and nature of association between two or more variables (Cresswell, 2003). In this study, it determined the levels of Transformational Leadership, Quality of Work Life (QWL), and School Culture. Moreover, the relationship between Transformational Leadership and School Culture, as well as between Quality of Work Life and School Culture, will also be explored.

Participants

The respondents of the study were faculty members in a selected school in Davao City. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator from a total population of 200 faculty members, a total of 132 respondents is required, assuming a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. To ensure that the sample accurately represents the population, the stratified random sampling technique was employed. As described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), stratified random sampling is a probability sampling method in which the population is divided into subgroups or "strata" based on a particular characteristic, and samples are randomly drawn from each subgroup in proportion to their size in the overall population. Stratification was based on academic departments, meaning each participating departments will serve as a stratum. The number of faculty members selected from each department will be proportionate to its population of faculty members relative to the total population. Once the proportional allocation is determined, the faculty members *will* be randomly selected within each department using random number generation methods to ensure equal probability of selection.

Research Instrument

The study utilized survey questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. The instrument underwent content validation and pilot testing to ensure its reliability, successfully meeting the statistical criteria for validity. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Scale developed by Sirgy et al. (2001) was employed to measure faculty members' perceived quality of work life. It consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 – Strongly Agree to 1 – Strongly Disagree. The tool demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher sought formal approval from the Brokenshire Research Ethics Committee of the selected private higher education institution in Davao City, ensuring that all institutional protocols are followed. Upon receiving approval, the researcher will provide a letter of invitation and informed consent form to the identified respondents. This document clearly explains the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Only after obtaining signed informed consent will the researcher proceed with the distribution of the survey questionnaires to the participants. Respondents were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used solely for academic and research purposes. Once the questionnaires are completed, the data will be collected, organized, and carefully tabulated. The researcher will then analyze and interpret the data using appropriate statistical tools, ensuring accuracy and objectivity throughout the process.

Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools were used in the study:

Mean and Standard Deviation was used to determine the levels of quality of work life and transformational leadership of faculty members in private higher education institutions.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to determine the relationship between quality of work life and transformational leadership of faculty members.

Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to determine the influence of quality of work life (IV1) and transformational leadership (IV2) on school culture (DV).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Level of Quality of Work Life

HEALTH AND SAFETY NEEDS	Mean	SD	Description
I feel physically safe at work	4.28	0.751	Very High
My job provides good health benefits	3.69	0.891	High
My college or university helps me do my best to stay healthy and fit	3.72	0.751	High
Category Mean	**3.90**	**0.668**	**High**

Table 1 presents the level of Quality of Work Life of the respondents across seven need dimensions. Overall, the respondents reported a high level of quality of work life (Overall Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.476). Among the dimensions, Knowledge Needs (M = 4.38, SD = 0.607) and Actualization Needs (M = 4.26, SD = 0.607) were rated very high, indicating that respondents strongly perceive their work as intellectually enriching and supportive of professional growth and self-fulfillment.

Social Needs (M = 4.12, SD = 0.512), Esteem Needs (M = 4.17, SD = 0.616), Economic and Family Needs (M = 4.04, SD = 0.674), and Health and Safety Needs (M = 3.90, SD = 0.668) were all rated high, reflecting positive perceptions of workplace relationships, compensation, security, and well-being. Aesthetic Needs also obtained a high rating (M = 4.02, SD = 0.850), suggesting that respondents experience creativity and meaningful engagement in their work. These findings imply a generally supportive and motivating work environment.

Table 2. Transformational Leadership

Idealised Influence (Attributed)	Mean	SD	Description
Goes beyond his/her self-interest for good of others	4.28	0.528	Very High
Builds my respect by his/her actions	4.31	0.541	Very High
Instills pride in being associated with him/her	4.17	0.658	High
Displays extraordinary talent of competence	4.17	0.711	High
Category Mean	**4.23**	**0.534**	**Very High**

Table 2 shows that respondents perceived their leaders as demonstrating a high level of transformational leadership, with an overall mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.517). All leadership dimensions obtained high ratings.

Among the dimensions, Idealised Influence (Attributed) registered a category mean of 4.23 (SD = 0.534), indicating that leaders are viewed as role models who earn respect, instill pride, and prioritize collective interests. Idealised Influence (Behaviour) also yielded a high rating (M = 4.11, SD = 0.632), reflecting leaders' consistency in values, beliefs, and ethical standards.

Inspirational Motivation obtained a category mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.789), suggesting that leaders effectively communicate optimism, confidence, and a compelling vision for the future. Meanwhile, Individualised Consideration recorded a high rating (M = 4.15, SD = 0.592), indicating that leaders attend to individual needs, provide coaching, and foster personal development. Overall, the results affirm that leadership practices within the institution are strongly transformational in nature.

Table 3. Level of School Culture

DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR	Mean	SD	Description
Someone in class cannot be handled even by a teacher	3.00	1.102	Moderate
Swearing during recess	3.17	1.002	Moderate
Swearing is not accepted at all	3.48	1.184	Moderate
Smoking in lavatories or stairs	1.76	0.872	Low
Walls and furniture are vandalized	2.10	1.012	Low
Director intervention is needed to stop fights	2.86	1.187	Moderate
Disorder stops only when students get tired	2.31	1.198	Low
Class has a reputation of bullies	1.97	0.865	Low
I avoid bringing valuables to school	2.93	1.067	Moderate
Category Mean	**2.62**	**0.634**	**Moderate**

Table 3 presents the level of school culture as perceived by the respondents, with an overall mean of 2.78 (SD = 0.510), indicating a moderate level of school culture.

The dimension School Well-Being obtained the highest category mean (M = 3.51, SD = 0.571), suggesting that students generally experience a positive, supportive, and enjoyable school environment characterized by mutual respect and a sense of belonging.

In contrast, Deviant Behaviour recorded a lower category mean (M = 2.62, SD = 0.634), implying that while some undesirable behaviors are present, they are not highly prevalent. Similarly, Subjective Unsafety yielded a low to moderate rating (M = 2.19, SD = 0.801), indicating that students infrequently experience feelings of insecurity, such as bullying, fighting, or harassment.

Overall, the findings suggest that although elements of deviant behavior and unsafety exist, the school culture is largely characterized by well-being and positive social interactions.

Table 4. Relationship between Variables

Table 4 presents the relationship between the independent variables and school culture. The results reveal a very weak negative relationship between quality of work life and school culture (r = -0.072), which is not statistically significant (p = .710). Similarly, transformational leadership also shows a very weak negative correlation with school culture (r = -0.119), and this relationship is likewise not significant (p = .540). These findings indicate that neither quality of work life nor transformational leadership has a significant linear relationship with school culture.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	School Culture		
	R	p-value	Remarks
Quality of Work life	-0.072	.710	Not Significant
Transformational Leadership	-0.119	.540	Not Significant

Table 5. Influence of quality of work life and transformational Leadership on the School Culture

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of quality of work life and transformational leadership on school culture. The regression model yielded a very low coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.0141), indicating that only 1.41% of the variance in school culture is explained by the combined influence of the two independent variables.

Individually, quality of work life does not significantly predict school culture (β = 0.0101, p = .969), while transformational leadership also fails to show a significant influence (β = -0.1253, p = .631). Although the constant is statistically significant, the overall model suggests that neither quality of work life nor transformational leadership significantly influences school culture.

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	3.2449	0.920		3.5266	.000	
Quality of Work life	0.0108	0.276	0.0101	0.0390	.969	Not Significant
Transformational Leadership	-0.1235	0.254	-0.1253	-0.4858	.631	Not Significant

Note: R=.119, R-square=.0141, F=0.187, P<.05

Conclusion

This study examined the levels of quality of work life, transformational leadership, and school culture, as well as the relationships and predictive influence among these variables. The findings reveal that respondents generally experience a high quality of work life, with an overall mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.476). Particularly high ratings were observed in Knowledge Needs (M = 4.38, SD = 0.607) and Actualization Needs (M = 4.26, SD = 0.607), indicating that the work environment strongly supports professional growth, learning, and self-fulfillment. Other dimensions, including Social Needs (M = 4.12), Esteem Needs (M = 4.17), Economic and Family Needs (M = 4.04), and Health and Safety Needs (M = 3.90), were likewise rated high, reflecting generally favorable working conditions.

In terms of leadership, transformational leadership practices were perceived at a high level, with an overall mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.517). All leadership dimensions—Idealised Influence (Attributed: M = 4.23), Idealised Influence (Behaviour: M = 4.11), Inspirational Motivation (M = 4.14), and Individualised Consideration (M = 4.15)—were consistently rated high, suggesting that leaders are viewed as ethical, inspiring, supportive, and development-oriented.

With respect to school culture, the results indicate a moderate overall level (M = 2.78, SD = 0.510). While School Well-Being was rated high (M = 3.51, SD = 0.571), dimensions related to Deviant Behaviour (M = 2.62) and Subjective Unsafety (M = 2.19) were rated low to moderate, suggesting the presence of certain behavioral concerns despite generally positive social conditions.

Correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between quality of work life and school culture (r = –0.072, p = .710) and between transformational leadership and school culture (r = –0.119, p = .540). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that quality of work life (β = 0.0101, p = .969) and transformational leadership (β = –0.1253, p = .631) did not significantly influence school culture. The regression model explained only 1.41% of the variance in school culture (R^2 = 0.0141; F = 0.187), indicating that other factors beyond the scope of this study may play a more substantial role in shaping school culture.

Overall, while respondents reported high levels of quality of work life and transformational leadership, these variables were not significant predictors of school culture, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of school cultural dynamics.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance educational outcomes, institutional practices, and scholarly inquiry:

School Administrators. Educational institutions should continue to strengthen professional development programs that promote lifelong learning and self-actualization, given the high levels of quality of work life (Overall M = 4.12) and transformational leadership (Overall M = 4.16) reported by respondents. Structured learning opportunities, mentoring programs, and competency-based training should be integrated into institutional development plans to sustain high levels of knowledge acquisition and professional growth. Furthermore, education leaders should embed school culture formation into

faculty development initiatives, ensuring that leadership competencies are not only instructional in nature but also explicitly aligned with fostering positive behavioral norms, inclusivity, and student well-being.Despite high ratings in quality of work life and leadership, their non-significant relationship and influence on school culture indicate the need for more targeted, culture-spec ific interventions. School administrators and policymakers should implement evidence-based behavior management systems, restorative practices, and student support mechanisms to address moderate deviant behavior (M = 2.62) and subjective unsafety (M = 2.19). Leadership practices should be translated into visible, actionable strategies that directly impact daily school interactions, such as participatory governance, consistent policy enforcement, and collaborative problem-solving. Additionally, institutions should adopt regular monitoring tools to assess school culture independently from staff satisfaction indicators.

Future Research. Future studies should examine additional determinants of school culture beyond quality of work life and transformational leadership, as the current model explains only 1.41% of the variance in school culture ($R^2 = 0.0141$). Variables such as organizational climate, student engagement, peer dynamics, institutional policies, and community involvement warrant further investigation. Employing mixed-methods or longitudinal research designs is also recommended to capture the contextual and evolving nature of school culture. Qualitative data may provide deeper insights into why positive working conditions and leadership practices do not necessarily translate into stronger cultural outcomes.

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